Death and the Textile Industry in Nigeria

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Introduction

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Introduction

> She tried to discover what kind of woof Old Time, that greatest and longest-established Spinner of all, would weave from the threads he had already spun into a woman. But his factory is a secret place, his work is noiseless, and his Hands are mutes.
>
> Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854: 71)

During the period from 2002 to 2005, three of the four largest textile mills in city of Kaduna, the capital of Kaduna State, in northern Nigeria, had closed (Akinrinade and Ogen 2008; Maiwada and Renne 2013). The fourth mill closed in 2007 although it was reopened with reduced staff in 2010 (Babadoko 2007; Isuwa 2013a). None of the other mills has reopened, and as of 2020, remittances have only been paid to laid-off workers from one mill (and its affiliated mill), while those who worked at the other closed mills have not been paid their entitlements. In this volume, I examine the consequences of the closure of one of these mills, Kaduna Textiles Ltd, which ended production in December 2002 without paying workers their final remittances (Mudashir 2011a). The closure of this mill had significant consequences for the lives and subsequent deaths of many KTL textile workers, as well as for the lives of their widows and children.

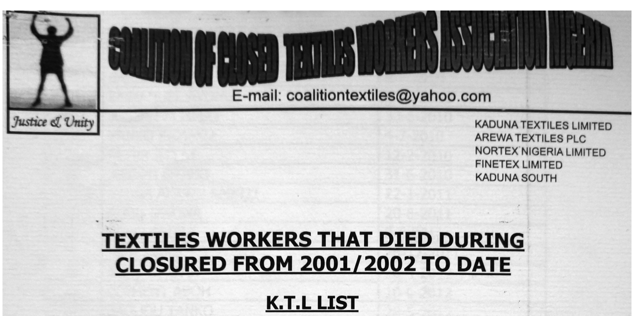
This study builds upon research on the history of death in African societies (Lee and Vaughan 2008; Jindra and Noret 2011), particularly changing ideas about proper burial practices and colonial attempts to regulate graves and cemeteries in urban spaces. In Kaduna, these changes have contributed to writing the names of the dead on cement-covered graves and tombstones, on death certificates, in funeral programs, and in cemetery record books.[1] This naming of the dead reflects a shifting emphasis from the unnamed dead associated with an ancestral spiritual afterlife to more specific social, economic, and political relationships discussed by Thomas Laqueur (2015), in his volume, *The Work of the Dead*. Yet despite these changes in naming, burying, and counting the dead, Laqueur notes an overarching concern with showing respect for the dead through particular practices and rituals, some of which reflect earlier social and historical precedents, which are too important to be forgotten. This concern

also reflects the continuing importance of the ways that the dead work for the living, maintaining connections to people, property, and position.

In *Death and the Textile Industry in Kaduna, Nigeria*, the dead work in a related but somewhat different way. In 2005, a group of unemployed textile mill workers and their wives, as well as the widows and children of deceased workers, met in Kaduna to establish the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria (Alimi 2018; Figure I.1, I.2). At this meeting, group leaders began their list of the names of workers who had died since the mills where they worked had closed (Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textiles Workers Association Nigeria 2017). According to the chairman of the Coalition and former textile mill worker, Comrade Wordam Simdik, "Medication is a luxury to us. Our children no longer go to school…We recorded more than 2000 deaths of our members and families." (Isuwa 2013c). He attributed these deaths to mill closures and to the non-payment of termination benefits (Adama 2014; Alabi 2011; Isuwa 2013a; Mudashir 2011a, b). By emphasizing the number of



Figure I.1 Member wearing Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria-Kaduna branch jacket, 26 January 2017, Kaduna (Photograph by E.P. Renne).


COALITION OF CLOSED TEXTILES WORKERS ASSOCIATION NIGERIA

E-mail: coalitiontextiles@yahoo.com

Justice & Unity

KADUNA TEXTILES LIMITED
AREWA TEXTILES PLC
NORTEX NIGERIA LIMITED
FINETEX LIMITED
KADUNA SOUTH

TEXTILES WORKERS THAT DIED DURING CLOSURED FROM 2001/2002 TO DATE

K.T.L LIST

Figure I.2 Letterhead of list compiled by the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textiles Workers Association Nigeria of KTL textile workers who died, with names and dates of death (Photograph by E.P. Renne).

worker deaths and publicizing their families' plight through the local press and protests, the Coalition sought to put pressure on government to pay laid-off workers' termination remittances. In this case, the dead are important to the living as a way of forcing government officials to provide unpaid remittances to workers (or their surviving widows) and to reopen these mills. The lists of their names, documented by the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria and publicized by these men's widows in demonstrations in Kaduna, both commemorate the dead and employ their names for the benefit of the living (Ahmadu-Suka 2017, 2019; Alabi 2011).

This volume considers the Coalition's actions as a way of thinking about death and the ways that the dead work for the living by focusing on three main themes. The first examines the growth of the city of Kaduna as a colonial construct which, as the capital of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, was organized by neighborhoods, by public cemeteries, and by industrial areas. The second theme examines the establishment of textile mills in the industrial area in the southern part of the city and new ways of thinking about work and labor organization, time regimes and money, and health, particularly occupational ailments documented in mill clinic records and by widows' descriptions of their husbands' illnesses. The third theme discusses the consequences of deindustrialization, focusing on KTL mill workers' deaths and the lives of their widows and children. Widows describe the burials of their husbands in Kaduna or in their hometowns—which reflect their ethnic and religious backgrounds—as well as their work to provide their children with education, housing, and food (Isuwa 2013c). Their children also have had various responses to their families' declining economic situation—some worked, some married, while some became involved in illegal activities and drug use. As such, deindustrialization in Kaduna, as elsewhere in the world, has contributed to unemployment, poverty, hunger, illness, and death (Minchin 2013), although within a particular historical context (Cowie and Heathcott 2003). While remittances for dismissed KTL workers remain unpaid, and the mill—as a source of employment and income for their children—has not reopened, the Coalition's listing of the names of the dead work continues, as a constant reminder of their society's injustice.

The city of Kaduna

This study is situated in the city of Kaduna, which was created during the colonial era when large tracts of land were set aside for administrative buildings, for cemeteries, and for an industrial area where the Kaduna Textiles Ltd mill later was constructed (David Whitehead & Sons 1973; Oyedele 1987). While initially the land was populated by the Gbagyi people (Gandu 2011), in 1917 the city was formally named as the capital of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Simon 1992: 141) and the Governor, Frederick Lugard, had offices for colonial administrators and military personnel built there (Medugbon 1976). Subsequently, migrants from southwestern Nigeria came to work as clerks in government

offices and traders from the southeast established shops in Kaduna's growing markets (Bununu et al. 2015). With the opening of the Kaduna Textile Ltd mill in 1957 in the Kakuri area of the city south of the Kaduna river, more migrants from the many small ethnic groups in southern Kaduna state as well as from Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, and Kogi states (generically referred to as "the Middle Belt" of Nigeria) came to work in this and other mills (Figure I.3). Indeed, a majority of the workers at Kaduna Textiles Ltd interviewed in 1987 came to the mill from southern Kaduna (41%) and Middle Belt (39%) states, while 83% of KTL workers were Christian and 8% were Muslim (Andrae and Beckman 1999: 302). Through the missionary efforts of Catholic and Sudan Interior Mission churches in the Middle Belt area (Gaiya 2018; Ijagbemi 1986), those who had converted to Christianity also had some western education. Their ability to read and write as well as their familiarity with clock-based time-keeping made them attractive employees for the new mills. Additionally, many who settled in Kaduna in the areas surrounding the mills—such as Narayi and Sabon Tasha—established churches in their neighborhoods, which supported their Christian burial practices.

However, the large public cemeteries, which were established and overseen by colonial government officials, were related to their own concerns with health. Such cemeteries reflected colonial efforts to move the burial of the dead to areas separated from family houses, to control specific burial

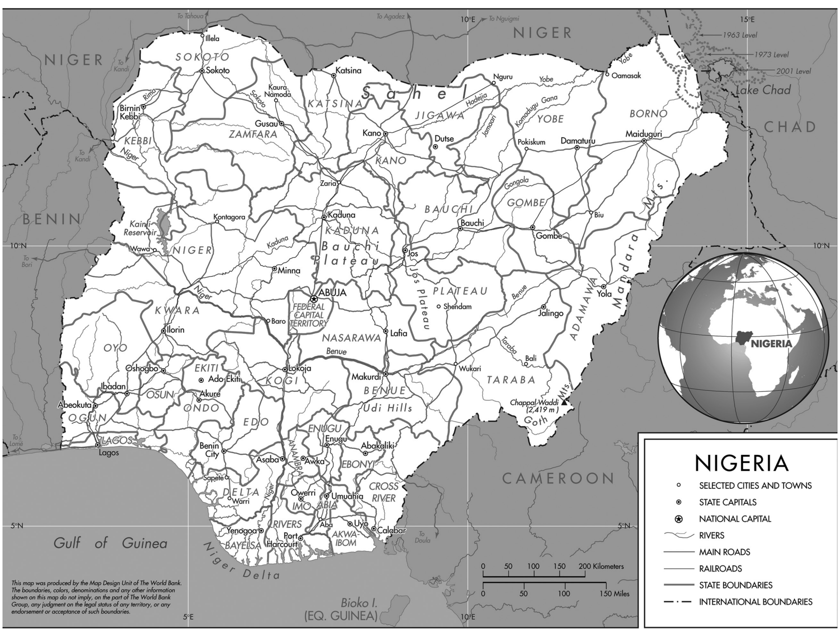


Figure I.3 Map of Nigeria indicating Kaduna and Middle Belt states (Courtesy of the World Bank).

procedures in Kaduna, and to register the names of the dead (Lee and Vaughan 2008). For example, Muslims were said to bury their dead in shallow graves as "The top soil is considered to be more blessed," according to John Carrow, the Resident of Kano Province. For health reasons, colonial health officials sought to enforce the burial of bodies at a depth of at least three feet (Nigerian National Archives-Kaduna, 1944–1957). Hence, the histories of the establishment of the large public cemeteries in Kaduna—distinguished by religion and often by race, ethnicity, and birthplace—reflect another aspect of the work of the dead. For, to some extent, these cemeteries reinforced distinctive identities of place associated with people.[2] However, not all labor migrants from the south followed government instructions, preferring burials next to their houses instead—as a way of maintaining a connection between the deceased, living family members, and ownership of their houses in Kaduna. Others travelled south with mill workers' bodies in order to maintain family connections and claims with the town or village from whence the deceased had come. When the mill was still operating, KTL helped families when a worker died although when it stopped production, this practice largely ended—yet another aspect of the impact of the mill's closure on family members.

Descriptions of the consequences of the absence of the dead for those who remain were elicited through extended interviews with widows and children whose husbands and fathers had worked at the Kaduna Textile Ltd mill. These interviews were conducted with the help of women leaders from the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria. Widows responded to questions about their relations with their husbands, their lives before and after the mill closed, and the situations—often illness—that led to their husbands' deaths. Some were able to provide their husbands' KTL mill ID cards, family photographs, death certificates, funeral programs, and even cloth caps; for those living in Kaduna, some assisted us in visits to their husbands' graves. Widows were then asked about their current situations and those of their children, the work they were involved in, housing, and food. Indeed, for some, hunger—"food poverty"—has been an ongoing concern (Charlton and Rose 2002; de Montclos et al. 2016),[3] and several women mentioned food when asked to relate a special memory of their husbands. After concluding these, at times, emotional interviews, I asked permission to take each woman's photograph, later printing copies which I gave to them. Many of these portraits convey a sense of the sorrow as well as the strength of these women, and are included as an important part of this study (see Chapter 5 Interlude: Widows' Portraits).

Following the deaths of their husbands, widows worked hard to support themselves and their families, often with little return and sometimes with unfortunate health consequences for themselves (Potash 1986). Many were unable to find funds for their children's continued education,[4] although extended family members sometimes helped out with school and examination fees. In some cases, older children helped their mothers as was the case with one older son who grows ginger on the family farm in order to help support his siblings. Not all mothers were so fortunate as some children, particularly sons, became

involved in robberies and in the use of drugs such as Tramadol (Agha 2018; Ngbokai 2019).[5]

These three themes in which the dead work for the living in various ways are examined in more detail in the chapters that follow this introduction. The volume concludes with a discussion of the consequences of the deindustrialization of national textile manufacturing, youth unemployment, and the possibilities for reinventing the textile and clothing industry in Kaduna. Indeed, the deindustrialization of the textile industry in Kaduna may mark the end of an era and the beginning of a new one (Cowie and Heathcott 2003). Precisely what this new era will look like is unclear. Yet as one former KTL mill worker observed:

> Running a textile factory is like farming—because we have many millions of people in Nigeria who are looking for food to eat, [the demand is there]; the same thing applies to clothes to wear. So, the question is if textiles are to work in Nigeria, we need to stop imports from outside.
>
> (Interview: Sylvester Gankon, 24 May 2018, Kaduna)

He may be overly optimistic—for even if textile imports were halted, the mills' obsolete equipment needs to be replaced and electricity must be regularly supplied (Agbese et al. 2016; Onyeiwu 1997). But "it would be wonderful," as he observed, if these problems could be addressed in imaginative ways and if new forms of textile and cloth production could be initiated in Kaduna (Agabi 2019; Agbese and Alabi 2017; Aremu 2016).

The work of the dead for the living, the work of the living for the dead

Naming the dead

Aside from the list of names of deceased Kaduna Textile Ltd mill workers collected by the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria, the dead—through their graves—mark families' claims to houses and property and provide long-distance links between family members who travel to home villages to bury them and later return to commemorate them. As Robert Hertz famously noted in his volume, *Death and the Right Hand* (1960), while death is a biological event, how the dead are treated is framed by cultural beliefs and social practices, which may change over time but which may also continue in various ways. For the many men who migrated to Kaduna from agricultural areas in the south to work in the Kaduna textile mills and who subsequently died, their bodies were often taken back to be buried in family compounds in their home villages—rather than buried in cemeteries or near their houses in Kaduna.

Workers from southern Kaduna and Middle Belt states came from many small ethnic groups with their own burial practices. In the area around

Kafanchan, in southern Kaduna state, these ethnic groups include the Jaba [Ham], Kagoro, Atakar, and Kataf [Atyap] people.[6] 'Biyi Bandele-Thomas provides readers of his novel, *The Sympathetic Undertaker*, with a sense of these myriad ethnic groups and their respective languages:

> At that time, at the turn of the last century, what existed was a cluster of villages, each of which regarded itself as a sovereign state independent from the others. Even though they were all literally within a stone's throw of one another, their only common denominator was that they were all agricultural in economy; aside from that they each had a unique cultural identity, a separate language, a unique system of self-governance. They were the archetype of what one poet now calls our "*One kilometer is another language*" phenomenon. Our Tower of Babel.
>
> (Bandele-Thomas 1991: 34)

Oliver Bijip, who worked at Kaduna Textiles Ltd, and one of his widows, Martina Oliver, came from the area described by Bandele-Thomas, just northwest of the city of Kafanchan, in southern Kaduna state. Bijip was from the Atakar ethnic group, while his wife, Martina, was from the neighboring Kagoro group, from the village of Kwiya in Kagoro Local Government in southern Kaduna state. While Martina had some primary school education, her husband completed Primary 6; his ability to read and write made him an attractive hire as a weaving room worker at the KTL mill (Figure I.4). Oliver Bijip came to work at KTL in 1976 and worked there for 26 years. He died in 2003, shortly after the mill closed. He was buried in his family's compound in Kauyemu, Kachia Local Government.

Thus, despite the presence of church graveyards, as described by Bandele-Thomas (1991: 34): "The missionaries came and set up their churches and

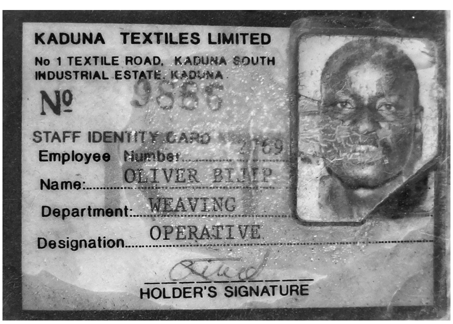


Figure I.4 Oliver Bijip came from the village of Kauyemu, in Kachia Local Government, to work in the Weaving Department at Kaduna Textiles Ltd in 1976. He died in 2003 and was buried in Kauyemu (Photograph of ID card by E.P. Renne, courtesy of Martina Oliver, Kaduna).

schools—and cemeteries—among these villages," the Bijip family preferred to bury him in the family house, although they did write his name and date of death on his grave. However, Oliver Bijip's name is listed elsewhere, as number 134 on the list compiled by the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria.

Counting the dead: the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria

The Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association of Nigeria began to collect information on the deaths of mill workers at KTL, Arewa Textiles, Nortex, and Finetex textile mills in 2005 for the purposes of documenting the impact of textile mill dismissals and the non-payment of remittances on the lives of laid-off workers. According to the woman leader of the Coalition, Rahab Gajere:

> We didn't have anything to do, we started thinking that since our husbands lost their jobs, we started this organization in order to discuss what is disturbing us and to know how to solve our problems. Because since the company is closed and they have not paid our husbands…we started the organization to make the government realize our problems.
>
> (Interview: 18 January 2017, Kaduna)

They publicized the increasing numbers of mill workers' deaths at a demonstration in early September 2011 at the Kaduna Textiles Ltd mill, in the Kakuri (Kaduna South) area of Kaduna, as was reported in the northern Nigerian newspaper, *Daily Trust*:

> Widows and children of some of the workers, who died while waiting for their entitlements, also took part in the protest. They carried placards with inscriptions: 'Revive textile factories,' 'Namadi Sambo come and redeem your pledges,' 'Yakowa come to our rescue,' among others. Speaking to our correspondent, one of the widows, Rahmatu Adamu appealed to Northern governors to settle the entitlement of their late husbands.
>
> (Mudashir 2011a)

The Coalition's demonstration was heavily policed. However, a subsequent demonstration that was to begin in front of the Arewa Textiles mill in November 2011 was dispersed. Rahab Gajere told a *Daily Trust* reporter that this was their fourth attempt to demonstrate:

> "Every time, government will appeal to them to exercise patience. We have been patient enough. This time around, no more patience. Government should pay our husbands. If they pay us, they will not see us outside again. We are fighting for our husbands' money that they worked for and not

> government's money." She called on the nineteen northern states to come to their rescue and ensure the payment of their husbands' gratuities and terminal benefits.
>
> (Alabi 2011)

While the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Associations Nigeria sought to use mortality data to put pressure on the government, it is not a registered union. Thus, its activities are frowned upon, both by officials of the government's New Nigeria Development Corporation and of the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria. The former was hoping to find buyers for the other closed mills; they did not want protests to disturb their plans (Interview: SH, 29 January 2017, Kaduna). The latter were negotiating with majority mill shareholders to come to an agreement to settle remittances owed and, indeed, these negotiations were successful for one mill and its affiliate.[7] However, leaders of the National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria were constrained in their efforts as one former mill manager explained:

> About two or three years after the closure, the union took KTL management to court at Abuja. They asked them to calculate all the entitlements of workers and they did. And they said, "we are going to pay you." But you know, unfortunately, they didn't pay up until now—…And unfortunately, when the industry is not working, the union is weak. The union uses money to pursue any case—but since we're not working, the union does not have it.
>
> (Interview: Sylvester Gankon, 24 May 2018, Kaduna)

Under these circumstances, the Coalition's collection of mortality data for laid-off workers has been a potentially beneficial means for asserting workers' rights by their families. Indeed, data on the adverse effects of textile manufacturing on the lives of workers is related to studies of mortality records of textile mill workers elsewhere in the world. One such study, conducted by Peter Kirby, beginning in 1982, documented the causes of death of British textile workers, who were members of the National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers for the period from 1976 to 1980.[8] Using union data and official death certificates, Kirby calculated the proportional mortality ratio that specified the types of illnesses which were related to mill workers' deaths. This method, however, would not be possible for Kaduna Textile Ltd workers as official death certificates were not available nor was data on workers' ages, types of mill work, and causes of death collected (Kirby 1984: 12). Nonetheless, this mortality data—namely, the listing of names and dates of death—was an important step for clarifying the socioeconomic impact of textile mill closures, deindustrialization, and unemployment (Sen 1998).

Kaduna Textile Ltd mill workers who died, their widows, and families

In 2012, I was told to contact Alhaji Shaibu Yusuf by a staff member of the Department of Industrial Design at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, because of his leadership position at the Kaduna Textile Ltd mill. I interviewed him in February 2012. He died two years later in 2014, which I learned when I interviewed his wife, Sofia Shaibu Yusuf, in May 2018. According to her, he was born in 1960 in Ankpa, in Ankpa LG, Kogi State, and moved to Kaduna as a young man. In Shaibu Yusuf's interview, he focused on his education and work. After receiving a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Textile Technology from Kaduna Polytechnic, he began work at Kaduna Textile Ltd as deputy manager in the Spinning Department. He was responsible for the work of 200 men, both in meeting production targets for certain sizes of yarn and for sizing thread to be used in weaving. As he observed in 2012, ten years after the closing of the KTL mill:

> When I started in Kaduna Textiles, the country was ok. The economy started falling back, as a result of government policies—such as the lifting of the ban on textile materials…Then another government policy that affected the textile industry was that power was not steady. When I started, it was perfect…[And] we were supposed to change out machinery, to meet modern challenges but it was not done. All these things, if they are addressed, [the industry] can start back, especially if there is oversight.
>
> (Interview: Shaibu Yusuf, 28 February 2012, Kaduna)

After his dismissal when the mill closed, Yusuf was "just managing" as a security guard for one company. The family's situation worsened in the years after his dismissal from KTL. By virtue of his work as a deputy manager in the Spinning Department, Shaibu Yusuf and his family were allocated housing in the junior managers' KTL Quarters, and his widow, Sofia, continues to live there. While there are a few other Muslim widows living in the Quarters, the majority of KTL widows living in the Quarters or in the Kakuri and southern areas of Kaduna are Christians, originally from the south.[9]

The KTL mill manager, Sylvester Gankon, who knew Shaibu Yusuf when they worked together at the mill, agreed with his assessment of the problems that led to its closure. He noted that the government has failed to organize proper planning for the replacement of outdated machinery, that there was insufficient control of textile imports by customs agents, and that the provision of regular electrical power was lacking (Interview: Sylvester Gankon, 28 February 2012, Kaduna). The views of these two men that government mismanaged the industry was seconded by one textile mill owner in Kano, who noted, "You know, the disaster in the textile industry, a lot of it was man-made, especially the northerners…Whoever is in textiles today can hardly

forgive some of the Northern leaders, they surrendered it (Interview: S.D. Adhama, 23 January 2017, Kano; see Maiwada and Renne 2013: 184; also Odunlami et al. 2016).[10]

This failure of the Nigerian government to support the Kaduna textile industry and to maintain related infrastructure was also reflected in its failure to pay remittances to laid-off textile workers at the two mills, Arewa Textiles and Kaduna Textiles Ltd, with majority Northern Nigerian government ownership (through the New Nigeria Development Corporation). Thus, on 6 June 2013:

> The National Union of Textile Garment and Tailoring Workers of Nigeria (NUTGTWN) yesterday called on the 19 Northern States governors to pay N687 million to the staff of closed Kaduna Textile Limited (KTL). The union had in September 2005 obtained a court judgment for settlement of the entitlements of the workers amounting to N687,073,346.00 by its owners, 19 northern states. The governors have not adhered to the court orders in spite of appeals, prayers, rallies and protests by the workers and its unions.
>
> (Isuwa 2013b)

As Comrade Issa Aremu, General Secretary of NUTGTWN and Vice President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) wrote in a letter in 2013: "The union is disturbed by the continuous closure of Kaduna Textiles Limited since December 2002. Even more worrisome is the continuous delay in settlement of the entitlements of KTL workers by its owner-19 Northern States of the Federation. KTL workers are suffering untold hardship due to nonpayment of their benefits" (Isuwa 2013b).

As of 2020, these payments had still not been made and plans for reopening the KTL mill have not been successful. For example, in early 2017, initial negotiations with the Turkish textile firm, SUR International Investments, were conducted (Interview: Wuese Iorver, 18 January 2017, Kaduna). A follow-up meeting in August 2017 in Kaduna led to the plans for a $15 million partnership for renovating KTL, which was to focus on the production of military and workers uniforms (Agbese and Alabi 2017).[11] Initially, the company was to refurbish the mill with updated equipment in order to produce uniforms, while it was expected that other garments would also be manufactured. According to Alhaji Ali Gombe, Chairman of the Restructuring Committee-KTL, "SUR will provide 35 percent of the total funds while the balance would be shared between the Federal Government and 19 Northern states" (Daily Trust 2017). However, one KTL mill worker was less optimistic:

> Last year people from Turkey said that they would come. Then from nowhere, quiet. They will tell us that they will soon open…They came but I think that the problem is, you see, it's the light problem. When they came, they discovered no light [electricity]. And these machines cannot

> run on power from a generator, they will be running at a loss, to be frank. If NEPA did not stand up, there is no way. The machines use real power and not generator power.
>
> (Interview: Haruna Joshua, 10 May 2018, Kaduna)

Aside from infrastructural obstacles, others explained Turkish abandonment of this project in terms of a failed economic incentive:

> There is a snag in this arrangement as the company is insisting that the Federal Government invest 88 million USD in the project…but the Government is not investing in a privately-owned company…And the government funds are limited, they are not sufficient to take care of KTL.
>
> (Interview: Wuese Iorver, 1 May 2018, Kaduna)

While the parties involved initially planned to move forward on this project, the SUR management's insistence that a large prepaid contract for uniforms from the Ministry of Defense be provided led to the abandonment of the project (Interview: Abdullahi Ali Gombe, 13 November 2017, Kaduna).

While there have been other possible investors—such as the Chinese Shandong Lue Group—who were interested in renovating the KTL mill, to date no substantial plans have been proposed. Nonetheless, the Central Bank of Nigeria has recently sponsored several schemes for supporting the revival of the textile industry through cotton-growing loans and restrictions on access to subsidized foreign exchange for textile importers (Agabi 2019; Aminu 2019). These efforts are important, yet the challenges of electricity, obsolete equipment, and unrestricted imported textiles persist. How successfully these challenges are met will help to address the problem of growing numbers of unemployed young people in Kaduna. For as Akin Ajayi, the director general and chief executive officer of the Institute of Directors, Nigeria, has noted, "The collapse of industries in the Northern part of Nigeria has done more damage to the region than the Boko Haram crisis" (Isuwa 2012; see also Abubakar 2016). In other words, the indirect violence, reflected in lack of income, food, access to health care, and housing (e.g., Aijmir and Abbink 2000; Bourgois 2009; Farmer 2004; Watts 1983),[12] which has affected former mill workers and their families, is comparable to or even exceeds the intermittent, overt violence associated with Boko Haram militants in northeastern Nigeria as well as with the political violence associated with federal elections, the introduction of Shari'a law, and recent kidnappings in Kaduna (Ahmadu-Suka 2019; Angerbrandt 2011; Harris 2013).

Conclusion

> Like that man over there. The one in the lace babanriga…He's a carpenter. Specializes in coffins. Nothing but coffins. He calls himself an undertaker. That's

> absolute rubbish. [But] that man is one of the richest people in Kafanchan. Through coffins. Nothing but coffins.
>
> 'Biyi Bandele-Thomas, *The Sympathetic Undertaker* (1991: 127)

When Taiwo Alimi interviewed members of the Coalition of Closed Unpaid Textile Workers Association Nigeria in November 2018, he was told that with the closure of the Kaduna textile mills and without final benefit payments, "they feel 'dead and buried'" (Alimi 2018). Indeed, many workers from the Kaduna Textiles Ltd mill have actually died, which members of the Coalition have documented through the listing of their names and dates of deaths. While their efforts had a specific goal—they were meant to put pressure on the government and textile mill management to live up to their agreement to pay workers' remittances, this naming of the dead reflects changing social relations in northern Nigerian society. For like the re-evaluation of the changing relationship between time and work—from farm work based on the seasonal succession of night and day and social relations to an impersonal time-money regime and the specialized work of the textile mills (Thompson 1967), making written lists of the names of the dead was part of another process of social transformation of people from farmers to mill workers. In the early 20th century, many rural Nigerians went by a single name—or several names, which reflected multiple social identities—family, ethnicity, town of origin, religious or political position. With the coming of Christian and Catholic missionaries to the areas now associated with southern Kaduna and Middle Belt states, converts acquired first and last names which were used in church and school attendance ledgers. This acquisition of lists of names was expanded to their use in hospital files as well as on birth certificates, tax records, census forms, and, at times, death certificates. With the opening of textile mills in the city of Kaduna, these names were compiled by company officials and health clinic personnel and were printed on ID cards. With the establishment of Nigeria as an independent state in 1960, these listings and forms of the names of the dead represented a particular social identity as citizens of Nigeria.[13] More recently, the naming of the dead—as deceased KTL mill-workers—underscores this identity as citizens, who deserve to have their negotiated rights recognized.

Alternatively, failure to name the dead implies their marginality and unimportance, as Laqueur (2015: 389) notes. The collapse of the textile industry and unemployment in Kaduna has contributed to growing inequality in Nigeria.[14] Yet a privileged few, some of whom have benefited from government positions and contracts, live ostentatiously in palatial compounds (Habila 2007; Oxfam 2017). Union officials, along with Coalition members who have insisted on making a list of names, are asserting the rights of the terminated textile workers—both the dead and the living—to their remittances and to a modicum of equality as human beings. The following chapters document the history of these efforts and lives, as well as their hopes and concerns for what lies ahead.

Notes

1 Few obituaries for mill workers have been published in northern Nigerian newspapers, which differs from their extensive publication by Yoruba families in southwestern Nigerian newspapers (Lawuyi 1989; see also Newell 2016).

2 In January 1947, the Secretary, Northern Provinces wrote to the Resident of Sokoto Province concerning the need to establish—"under section 37 of the Births, Deaths and Burials Ordinance Chapter 47"—a public cemetery in Gusau in order to bury the bodies of British colonial officials who had died there (Nigerian National Archives-Kaduna, 1944–1957).

3 In 2017, a young boy was shot and killed on the grounds of the Command Secondary School—Kaduna, when he and his mates were caught packing sand. "While others ran away, the boy pleaded to be allowed to pack the sand in order to get something to eat" (Alabi and Ahmadu-Suka 2017).

4 The government's failure to pay Kaduna Textiles Ltd mill workers' termination remittances has contributed to the "cumulative disadvantage" of their children (Case and Deaton 2017), whose impoverishment and interrupted education have led to unemployment, disrupted social relationships, and illness.

5 While Tramadol was banned in 2018 (*Daily Trust* 2018), some of the children of former textile workers have found ways to obtain this and other drugs (which is discussed in Chapter 6).

6 During the 19th century under Sokoto Caliphate rule, many of these ethnic groups received Hausa names, for example the Ham people became known as the Jaba, while the Atyap became known as the Kagoro, Atakar, and Kataf.

7 The relative strength of this union in Kaduna reflects its initial organization as well as Kaduna mill workers' sense of independence associated with their largely agricultural backgrounds (Andrae and Beckman 1996). The organization of unions in the Kano textile mills was somewhat different (Andrae and Beckman 1999; Lubeck 1986).

8 This study calculated proportional mortality ratios, namely ratios for 5-year age groups (from 15 to 64 years), using national figures for deaths for a particular age group (multiplied by the deaths observed for all causes of a particular group of mill workers—for each age group) to come up with an expected number of deaths for a specific cause of death (e.g., cancer) to determine the denominator, the "expected number of deaths for Cause 'X'." The numerator became the "observed deaths Cause 'X'" for the specific group of mill workers. By dividing the observed deaths by the expected deaths and multiplying by 100, the proportional mortality ratio was calculated (Kirby 1984; see also Shilling and Goodman 1951).

9 This was the case for Martina Oliver, Oliver Bijip's widow, who lives in a small, single room in the Romi neighborhood in the southern part of the city.

10 This man specifically mentioned the negotiations regarding the World Trade Organization agreement and the concession by the chairman of the Kantin Kwari textile market in Kano "to politicians" who benefited from the opening of this market to Chinese textiles and traders (see also Taylor 2007).

11 SUR International Investments is a private firm that invests in joint ventures with countries in Africa, with a focus on the integrated manufacture of military uniforms. In 2001, the Sur Military Clothing Factory was established, which produces uniforms for armed forces in the Middle East and North Africa (http://www.surinternational.com).

12 While Marc-Antoine de Montclos et al. (2016) focus on the politics of mortality and counting the dead associated with armed conflict, they do mention its effects on food production and consumption as well as employment opportunities and viable housing.

13 Some women publicize their new married names in lists of announcements published in local newspapers. Most of the women widows or wives of laid-off mill workers whom we interviewed took their husbands' first name as their last name.

14 The National Bureau of Statistics reported that "60.9% of Nigerians in 2010 were living in 'absolute poverty'—this figure had risen from 54.7% in 2004." This report also stated that in 2010, "almost 100 million people [are] living on less than a $1 (£0.63) a day" (BBC World News 2012).

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